



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COMMISSION MEETS

The South Dakota Veterans Commission met Thursday, March 21, in Pierre. All six commissioners (Mike Birnbaum, Wade Hubbard, KC Russell, Gene Murphy, John Noyes, and Jim Ross) participated in the meeting, as well as Department of Veterans Affairs staff and guests.

Issues reviewed and discussed included East River Veterans Home, East River Veterans Cemetery, definition of a veteran, delivery of services to veterans, sequestration impacts and the Commission's vision and mission.

"I was very pleased with the interaction between the Commission, the staff and the guests," said Secretary Zimmerman. "It's evident that all have the veteran and their family at the forefront." Zimmerman stated, "it was great to have representation from the veterans service organizations and the South Dakota Veterans Service Officers Association at the meeting. Working together we can and will improve the lives of South Dakota's veterans."



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UNIVERSITY CENTER DEDICATES NEW VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held for a new Veteran's Resource Center Friday, March 15, at the South Dakota University Center in Rapid City (UCRC). The new center will serve as an informational hub designed for military veterans and active military or National Guard service members who are pursuing post-secondary education.

Currently, about 130 students, or a little more than 12 percent of the students at the University Center are veterans. The Veterans Resource Center will help military members and veterans understand their educational benefits, opportunities, and resources. The Veteran's Center also provides a designated area for veterans to socialize and quiet area to study.

Among the speakers at the ceremony were Gov. Dennis Daugaard, South Dakota National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, Black Hills State University President Kay Schallenkamp and South Dakota Board of Regents President Dr. Kathryn Johnson.



"It is a resource center for student veterans for all of their individual needs," said Gov. Daugaard. "It isn't the physical space that is needed, it is the knowledge that all those who work or volunteer in the center can impart."

The UCRC represents a partnership between South Dakota's public universities working together to deliver curriculum from all of the universities in one convenient location. Military students at the University Center now have one place to turn to for support services. "The Center is more than just the space, it is about the environment," said Dr. Johnson. "The Veteran's Center in the UCRC gives veterans a place to come," said Dwight Holt, of Veteran's Upward Bound, the coordinator for the Veteran's Resource Center. "Many of our veterans are non-traditional students, and this gives them a quiet place to do homework and a place to relate with other veterans."

FREEDOM BIRD

The Vietnam Veterans of America (Chapter 959 of Sioux Falls) will be hosting "Freedom Bird 2013" August 24-25, 2013, a tribute to all veterans and their families. The event will be held at the W. H. Lyon Fairgrounds in Sioux Falls from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.

This two-day event will include entertainment on the Front Porch, military exhibits in the Expo Building, games for kids, exhibits from the veterans service organizations. The VA will be on hand to answer questions from veterans regarding benefits.

A free meal will be held on Saturday evening at 5:00 pm and a church service will be held on Sunday morning at 10:00 am.



BLACK HILLS NATIONAL CEMETERY UNACCOMPANIED VETERANS MEMORIAL SERVICE

Black Hills National Cemetery

Unaccompanied Veterans

Memorial Service

April 1, 2013

9:00 AM

**Military Committal for Veterans Interred without
Honors Between**

January and March 2013

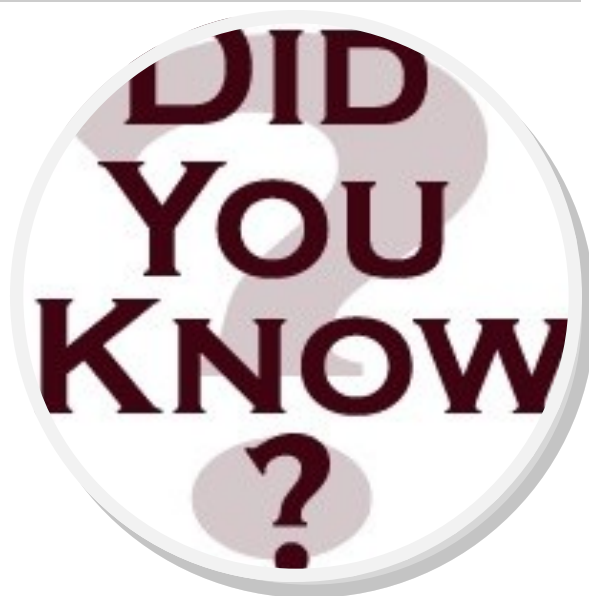
Honors to be Provided by Spearfish Honor Guard



DAV TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

The DAV Transportation Network has been one of the greatest venues for veterans to travel to and from VA medical facilities. This program clearly validates the commitment among veterans — veterans helping veterans. In 2011, the SD DAV transportation program logged in 32,882 volunteer hours, transporting 16,002 veterans 766,200 miles. In 2012, they logged in 30,165 volunteer hours, transporting 13,477 veterans 732,435 miles.

To put this into perspective — let's look at Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming. In 2012, Nebraska logged 18,163 volunteer hours, transporting 9,722 veterans 296,656 miles; North Dakota logged 8,596 volunteer hours, transporting 1,604 veterans 214,363 miles; and Wyoming logged 16,141 volunteer hours, transporting 6,889 veterans 401,312 miles. Congrats SD DAV and the DAV volunteer drivers on a job well done!!!!!!



**FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED**

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IRAQ WAR

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the Iraq war, Michelle and I join our fellow Americans in paying tribute to all who served and sacrificed in one of our nation's longest wars. We salute the courage and resolve of more than 1.5 million service members and civilians who during multiple tours wrote one of the most extraordinary chapters in military service. We honor the memory of the nearly 4,500 Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice to give the Iraqi people an opportunity to forge their own future after many years of hardship. And we express our gratitude to our extraordinary military families who sacrificed on the home front, especially our Gold Star families who remain in our prayers.

The last of our troops left Iraq with their heads held high in 2011, and the United States continues to work with our Iraqi partners to advance our shared interest in security and peace. Here at home, our obligations to those who served endure. We must ensure that the more than 30,000 Americans wounded in Iraq receive the care and benefits they deserve and that we continue to improve treatment for traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder. With a strong Post 9/11 GI Bill, we must help our newest veterans pursue their education and find jobs worthy of their incredible talents. And all Americans can continue to support and honor our military families who are pillars of so many of our communities. On this solemn anniversary, we draw strength and inspiration from these American patriots who exemplify the values of courage, selflessness and teamwork that define our Armed Forces and keep our nation great.

GOOD ARTICLES TO READ ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IRAQ WAR

Below are links to some good articles that have appeared in the South Dakota media with regard to the tenth anniversary of the Iraq War.

<http://www.yankton.net/articles/2013/03/16/community/doc5143e42fb4b36880132239.txt>

<http://www.yankton.net/articles/2013/03/15/community/doc5142920780a6c328154364.txt>

<http://www.blackhillsfox.com/2013/03/19/Ellsworth-Air-Force-Base-looks-back-at-10th-anniversary-of-Operation-Iraqi-Freedom>

http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/ten-years-on-south-dakota-veterans-question-purpose-and-sacrifice/article_8538d475-7af3-5722-8acd-857e90589ab0.html

http://www.volanteonline.com/news/iraq-war-anniversary-hits-home/article_82444544-9135-11e2-b2ff-001a4bcf6878.html

<http://www.yankton.net/articles/2013/03/20/community/doc514932dc28848491710822.txt>

<http://www.yankton.net/articles/2013/03/19/community/doc5147dc20897b4592173649.txt>

<http://www.newscenter1.tv/stories/13349.aspx>



Upcoming Events

Apr. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Apr. 11—Yankton Career Fair—Regional Technical Education Center—1:00-6:00 pm
Apr. 10—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:30 am
Apr. 12—Purple Up
Apr. 18—Operation Black Hills Cabin Open House—Custer
Apr. 19-21—VABHHCS Women Veterans Retreat—Ft. Meade VA Medical Center
May 3-5—DAV State Convention—The Lodge—Deadwood
May 11—Yellow Ribbon for the 935th—Rapid City
May 19—Yellow Ribbon for the 927th—Sioux Falls
Jun. 6-9—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota Hotel/Conference Center—Rapid City
Jul. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Aug. 24-25—Freedom Bird 2013—W. H. Lyon Fairgrounds—Sioux Falls 10:00 am—5:00 pm
Oct. 1—Black Hills National Cemetery Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am
Dec. 15—Wreaths Across America Ceremony—Black Hills National Cemetery—10:00 am



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us
Web site: <http://mva.sd.gov>

